Facilitation 2 - Proposal

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A class of 13 students needs to be split into groups. Half of the students have been together for a year, other half are new. Old members want to stick together but new members want a more fair team distribution. There is potential for issues of *groupthink* and *social loafing* within the old group who are already familiar with one another.

Approach taken by the facilitator involves categorizing members based on *expertise* and having them decide which skills/attributes are most important for *task success*. One member again suggests splitting the class with equal representation, leading to further rifts.

Two members from the old group, Learner A and Learner B, are at odds. The former wants to remain with Learner B while the latter is keen to mingle with the new students.

It is now up to the facilitator to find a way to facilitate a productive distribution of teams, one that takes into account the potential for phenomenon like *groupthink* and *social loafing* while supporting more positive phenomenon that could aid group formation and task success, such as *diversity*, *varying perspectives*, and *task appraisal*.

While going through the solutions to the questions related to case study 7 there are many key terms that relate to the class content. In this section, we will go over all the definitions of the terms and include some quotes from the articles we read throughout this semester to enhance the understanding and context of the terminology.

1. Task Appraisal

a. It is when the key players, the desired outcome, the main parts of the situation and the possible methods for handling the task or solving the problem are gone over and discussed.

2. Process Planning

   a. This is the part when CPS is appropriate for the situation at hand then the group takes a look at who the client is, who has what job and what they are expected to do for their role. Some of the roles included are client, facilitator and resource-group member. Then a starting point is chosen and preparations for CPS are done.

   b. "Some deliberate decisions need to be made regarding the number and type of human resources to be a part of the session. Heterogeneity of perspectives and experiences as well as homogeneity of levels of power should be considered." (Isaksen 29)

3. Groupthink

   a. It is when the members of a group start to think as a single unit instead of thinking as individuals.

   b. Existing members have spent too long together, and are unusually hostile to new ideas.

   c. "...peer pressure and conformity is a tendency for people to bring their behavior in line with group norms..." (Khan Academy)

d. "[groupthink] occurs when maintaining harmony among group members is more important than carefully analyzing the problem at hand and happens most often in very cohesive groups that are insulated from other people's opinions and feel that they are invulnerable…" (Khan Academy)

4. Social Loafing

   a. It is when members of a group are not doing their part of the group work and expect the other group members to fix the problem by doing the work for them.

   b. "[social loafing] The reduction of individual effort exerted when people work in groups compared to when they work alone." (Forsyth 335)

   c. "When people feel as though their level of effort cannot be ascertained because the task is a collective one, then social loafing becomes likely. But when people feel that they are being evaluated, they tend to exert more effort and their productivity increases." (Forsyth 336)

5. Group Development Process

   a. There are 4 stages of group development when groups are created to work together. The stages are forming, storming, norming and performing.

      i. Forming: When team members are testing the waters trying to see what the other members are like. Also to see what behaviour is acceptable.

       ii.   Storming: When there is conflict in the group.

       iii.   Norming: Team members learn to resolve the issues and focus on the task at hand.

       iv.   Performing: The group is a functioning team who can work together to get the job done.

6. Diverse knowledge

    a. When each team member has a different set of background knowledge and skill sets which allow for more innovation and creativity with solutions.

    b. New members of the group could provide insight that existing members can't think of.

    c. "Some deliberate decisions need to be made regarding the number and type of human resources to be a part of the session. Heterogeneity of perspectives and experiences as well as homogeneity of levels of power should be considered." (Isaksen 29)

7. Varying perspectives

    a. This is when people have different perspectives on a topic and differ in opinions which allows a group to work better at coming to with solutions to problems. With varying perspectives, the problem at hand can be analysed from different angles and get a more in depth and overall better solution.

b. "If a team is important, then a cooperative goal structure will be more appropriate. The group must be accountable for its outcomes. Reward and recognition systems need to build around different perspectives. If one wants the benefits of teamwork, then teams must be built and developed." (Isaksen 28)

8. Expertise

   a. Expert skill or knowledge someone has about a specific topic or field.

   b. "Expertise encompasses everything that a person knows and can do in the broad domain of his or her work." (Amabile 78)

   c. "Expertise and creative thinking are an individual's raw materials–his or her natural resources, if you will." (Amabile 79)

9. Implementing

   a. This is when a plan is actually being carried out. Everything that was planned can finally be put into place and then the effectiveness of the solution can be observed.

10. Structured freedom

   a. Instead of allowing complete freedom, this is a way to guide the creative team in the right direction while allowing the team members to still be creative and approach the work the way they want to.

b. Groups need to be small enough to manage the task efficiently while being big enough to have good diversity. Also groups need well defined tasks.

11. Contingencies

a. Possible negative outcomes which can happen when implementing a plan. It is providing a plan for unseen events.

12. Motivation

a. It is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors and in team settings groups are used to have team members motivate each other to get work done.

b. Groups foster innovation and hard work.

c. "...motivation losses were also sapping group productivity. People did not work as hard when they were in groups rather than alone. After watching a group of prisoners turning the crank of a flour mill, for example, he noted that their performance was "mediocre because after only a little while, each man, trusting in his neighbour to furnish the desired effort, contented himself by merely following the movement of the crank, and sometimes even let himself be carried along by it. This reduction of effort by individuals working in groups is now known as social loafing." (Forsyth 335)

d. "Group members typically have the choice of working for the group, for themselves, for both the group and themselves, or for neither and thus do not always choose to thrive for group success. If, however, group cohesiveness is so strong that all members feel united in a common effort, then group-oriented motives should replace individualistice motives, and the desire among members for group success should be strong" (Forsyth 137)

13. Process awareness

a. It is when team members have a clear and productive understanding of the conceptual framework of CPS and how they are going to come at a project. The process participants are aware of what is happening and what is going to happen in the process of the group work. They are also aware of procedures, rules, requirements and workflow.

Works Cited

Amabile, Teresa M. "How to Kill Creativity." *Harvard Business Review*, Sept. 1998, pp. 77–87.

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Facilitation 2 - Report

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The scenario of case study 7, covered by our group involves a good use of facilitation methods, but there are some advantages and disadvantages that will be discussed, as well as how the concepts and terms from the Case Study applies. A quick overview of the case study reveals that a class of 13 students needs to be split into groups. The facilitator asks their students to come up with a list of their own skills and attributes that they would like in their team, like a leader, or someone good at coming up with ideas. Students are asked to clarify these terms and they're written on a board, and are asked to write their names under these traits. The most important traits are discussed as the base of the formation of 2 larger groups. Another student brings up the suggestion of splitting students into mixed groups of old and new students as half of the students have been together for a year, the other half are new. Old members want to stick together but new members want a more fair team distribution, specifically student A makes it known they won't cooperate if they're separated from student B, who is more open to mixing the teams. The final decision is left to the students.

The key problems in this case stem from the old group wanting to work together, while the newer group thinks that it's unfair and would prefer the old and new groups to be mixed. When this suggestion is brought up, student A becomes upset at the concept of being split up from student B. The facilitator has left it to the students to come up with a decision on their own, with each half of the class wanting something different, thus a different approach is required. In this case, I don't think the students would have the authority to make decisions without conflict arising.

The main approach taken by the facilitator in this case study, was to allow students to brainstorm traits that they valued the most in groups, and allows students to

approach the group's formations with "**expertise**[, which] encompasses everything that a person knows and can do in the broad domain of his or her work" (Amabile 78). This allows students to effectively approach problems with **diverse knowledge** where students come from different backgrounds and each team member has a different set of background knowledge and skill sets which allow for more innovation and creativity with solutions. Another advantage that this approach takes is by forming groups not based on the new and old group members, there's less chance for bias as teams focus on the skills of each member. It has the potential to lower **groupthink,** a psychological in which a group of people collectively uphold values of unity and conformity over the opinions of individuals.

There are disadvantages to this approach as well. As students have mentioned that the approach leaves the groups open to having an unbalanced amount of people from the old and new groups, resulting in a power imbalance. This has the chance for **groupthink** to appear as well. As it occurs when existing members have spent too long together, and are unusually hostile to new ideas, or in situations where "group members typically have the choice of working for the group, for themselves, for both the group and themselves, or for neither and thus do not always choose to thrive for group success. If, however, group cohesiveness is so strong that all members feel united in a common effort, then group-oriented motives should replace individualistice motives, and the desire among members for group success should be strong" (Forsyth 137). Students placed in groups that they aren't satisfied with may also become **social loafers**, and **freeride** instead of participating in group work, causing more conflicts, as "[**social loafing** is] reduction of individual effort exerted when people work in groups

compared to when they work alone", which could be the case for student A and B if they became separated (Forsyth 335). Due to the **contingencies** in the approach, the group put forth our own recommendation for the case study.

Our recommendations for case study 7, follows the group process approach to facilitations, including a **task appraisal, process planning** which would lead to a proper **group development** in the best interests of the clients. The group process approaches to facilitations start with **client meetings**, in this case the students will be briefed on their project and discuss the student capabilities, roles and responsibilities, and any problems are brought to light, such as the conflict of new and old groups and student A and B. Next, the students are assessed that they are **effective clients** and have their **needs analysis** to make sure they're motivated, as "**motivation** losses were also sapping group productivity" and "this reduction of effort by individuals working in groups [can lead to] **social loafing**" (Forsyth 335). Students have most control over decisions but the teacher has the authority to make final decisions. **Task appraisal**, involving all of the students to understand the desired outcomes in the groups, and to understand any outlying issues and tensions to watch out for, and make sure students are able to follow the **group development** process of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning with minimal issues. In order to solve the dispute between new and old students, we would ensure that all groups have a near even number of new and old students, to add new dynamics as well as **varying perspectives**, which occurs "If a team is important, then a cooperative goal structure will be more appropriate. The group must be accountable for its outcomes. Reward and recognition systems need to build around different perspectives. If one wants the benefits of teamwork, then teams

must be built and developed" (Isaksen 28). The environment where the facilitation occurs in the classroom, and it will contain boards, paper, writing materials for students to use in the case of collaborative work, and brainstorming. During the **process planning** portion, students as clients will continually be a part of the facilitation process, where they're allowed to help with group formation within the parameters. They'll be given structured freedom where instead of allowing complete freedom, this is a way to guide the creative team in the right direction while allowing the team members to still be creative and approach the work the way they want to. This ensures that students will be able to have some level of formation of their own groups, but under the condition that there are even numbers or new and old students, and student A and B can stay in the same group. The floor will be opened for conversations, and the facilitator will be available for any remaining personal questions or concerns, which allows for the students to have a proper **process awareness**, which is when team members have a clear and productive understanding of the conceptual framework of CPS and how they are going to come at a project. The process participants are aware of what is happening and what is going to happen in the process of the group work. They are also aware of procedures, rules, requirements and workflow. The last steps in the process are the **facilitation goals** and the **plan of action**, which help students to **implement** the facilitation strategies and prepare their groups for success, and to head to the performing step of group development.

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